

March 16, 1962

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Dear Bert:

I very much appreciated the chance to talk to you over the phone about information problems in mental retardation and mental health. I would like to reiterate my strong feeling that it would be a very great mistake to continue the development of fragmentary approaches to the general problem of medical research communication and I rather fear that what you indicate as being in the wind at NIMH is a step in this wrong direction. It would be much more constructive, I feel, to try to infuse the National Library of Medicine with a more ambitious sense of mission than they now seem to have and thus make a more economical and timely use of resources that are going to be wasted by different groups doing the same jobs over and over again. I am enclosing two memoranda on the subject of science information that I anticipate will be represented in the ultimate reports of the President's Panel on Mental Retardation and the Science Information Panel of PSAC, respectively. I would be anxious to have further counsel on how the scientific interest in such proposals could be made manifest to help boost their implementation.

I have written to Gene Garfield to suggest that he get in touch with you about some interim services that could be developed in a hurry and might be actually the least wasteful in terms of reduplication of effort, since they will draw on some more centralized systems that he has in mind and has going. But I still do think we would be much better off to get down to business on the main problems rather than hacking at the branches. Also, enclosed is some material on citation indexing that Garfield has going currently with NIH and NSF support.

I emphatically believe that it would be absurd for us to think of setting up a center for mental retardation data here that would take precedence over anything that could be much better organized in Washington or Bethesda in connection with the National Library of Medicine or additional NIMH services. However, there are some exciting possibilities in the idea of unifying a DHEW medical information repository with some more extended services out of the Lane Library of medicine here at Stanford, and I would give every possible encouragement to this idea. As you may know, Lane Library had been located in

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San Francisco with the old Stanford Medical School, and has had a traditional obligation to serve not only the local medical school but the general California medical community. In fact, we are at the present time not really very well equipped to do this from a mechanical standpoint, and the service functions are a substantial burden on the proper operation of the library as a reference center. This would not be a too difficult problem to solve if the ambitions of the library service were set a little higher by coordination with the HEW repository and with a rather modest amount of financial help, which might not necessarily have to depend entirely on outside sources

Enc: 7227 (Satel)

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